

“GLOBAL JUSTICE AND MUTUAL ADVANTAGE”

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Abstract

Endorsing an account of morality that ties it to mutual advantage makes ‘the problem of global justice’ both more easy and more difficult. On the one hand, justice as mutual advantage holds that moral norms can apply wherever relations of mutual advantage obtain when the parties are roughly equal in their bargaining power. State boundaries have no particular significance and so the problem of global justice – if it is about how to extend state-centred theories of justice to the world – does not arise. On the other hand, the world is not made up of roughly equal states, and so it would seem that justice as mutual advantage would come to the aid of rich and powerful states, and place those that are weak and vulnerable beyond the protection of justice. In this paper, I first consider how far justice as mutual advantage will get us in underwriting something that might be generally recognisable as ‘global justice’. Second, I consider the criticism that however far it can get, justice as mutual advantage neither captures our moral experience nor accords with our moral intuitions. One possible reply is to say, ‘so much the worse for our intuitions’, but in this paper I want to investigate a more direct challenge to the critics’ views.